

MAGYAR FRONT



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Summer 2017

POSTCARDS OF THE
HUNGARIAN FRONTLINE
FIGHTERS' ASSOCIATION



SIX MAIL-BAGS LATER:

Steven Törincki provides
a Hungarian historical
experience to the public.



BILL DUTTON PHOTOGRAPH

www.NewFront.ca

A note from the Editor

I grew up and exist in one of the most multi-cultural regions of the planet – Vancouver, British Columbia. Being exposed to a myriad of traditions and points of view is something I am very grateful for, and I feel I have also done my part to share my own culture with a great many people. Being so intimately involved with things cultural has also brought a negative aspect to light – the sad truth that the vast majority of humanity know little to nothing about Hungary.

I have tried (and am still trying) to raise awareness of my heritage and history despite the lack of support from the majority of my elders, who believe that if it's not written in Hungarian, it's not worth reading - and the powers-that-be in the homeland, who don't seem to think it necessary to promote Hungary outside of its borders. Fortunately, I have managed to befriend a handful of staunch and open-minded Hungarians who recognize the dire need for Hungary to be recognized amidst the din of the more powerful countries of the world. Equally treasured are those few people outside of the homeland who go above and beyond the call of duty in making bits and pieces of our heritage accessible to others who may never experience anything Hungarian.

We are lucky to have a few excellent re-enactors in our IHMHPS, however, the focus of this issue is on one of them - Steven Törincsi. Steven became interested in history as a boy of 13, reading whatever he could get his hands on, spanning ancient Rome and Greece to the Second World War. Although his father is a Hungarian '56er who immigrated to England following the uprising, Steven's interest in things Hungarian is relatively recent. When I asked him about his heritage, Steven answered: "I have never been able to find out just what part my father played in the revolution, and it was only recently that I was informed of how he got from Hungary to the United Kingdom. He has visited a few times since the mid-1990s, but I get the impression he regards himself as British. My father never really included Hungarian traditions or even the language in my family household during my formative years."

Steven has been re-enacting since 2004 – the perfect hobby for an active history buff. "My first interest was the German forces of World War II, and I have been involved with two groups which portrayed German units." recalls Steven. The most readily available references to Hungarian units were for those of the Waffen SS, so Steven hungarianized a spare German tunic, and over time he collected his formidable body of research into his own specialized website. His interest expanded after becoming a member of the IHMHPS, and later, more deeply immersed in his roots, he replaced his German display with a Hungarian one.

Steven Törincsi lives in the East Midlands of England and worked in the engineering trade for 23 years before changing careers – now he's in the Royal Mail international accounts department. He has two sons, one grandson and five fish; and continues educating the public about Hungarian military history.

As a companion piece to Steven's article, I have featured some of my favourite Hungarian Frontline Fighters' Association postcards in this issue. Today we think of postcards as being rather quaint, or correspondence from far-off places. The veterans did produce their own commemorative and fund-raising postcards, but they also were an essential form of communication among the association's members.

P.Cz.

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Peter Czink, Editor-Designer

The New Front:
(International Hungarian Military
History Preservation Society)

*"To strive, to seek, to find,
and not to yield."*

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Membership in the
International Hungarian Military History
Preservation Society is \$40.00 annually,
and includes the *Magyar Front*.

The original *Magyar Front* was the
weekly newspaper of the Frontline
Fighter's Association, and was
published from the early 1930s until
the end of the Second World War.



by Steven Törincsi

Six Mail-Bags Later...

Once I made the decision to portray a small postal section of the Hungarian Army in World War II, I began with many hours researching online, gathering as much information as I could. As you can imagine, there is not much related information out there in English and surprisingly little in Hungarian. I managed to find one excellent website (www.taboriposta.hu); one Hungarian language book that the website is affiliated with, and a Hungarian Facebook page (www.facebook.com/groups/fellner). There is also another website (tbpostasok.webnode.hu) which had little information but great photos.

I work for a mail company, so I knew what the basic process would be, and then it was a case of using this knowledge in putting my display together. Using the pictures that I had collected as guidelines (along with my small collection of postcards), a great deal of time was spent making period letters and parcels so the display would be interesting and realistic. I also photocopied and duplicated my collection of original postcards. In order to make the display look as authentic as possible, each letter and parcel was individually named and addressed (if you get a chance to see the display, look closely - there may just be something with your name on it).

As the collection of letters and parcels began to build, it

struck me that I would need something to showcase them in. To give the display an animated feel of mail coming and going, the next thing that had to be addressed was period storage containers. Once again – more research, and luckily a newsreel exists that features views of the Hungarian mail bags that were used back then. I decided to make some, so more than a few evenings were spent sewing mail bags. Next, I created a template to enable me to stencil the correct wording. Six mail bags later, and along with some store-bought wooden crates, the mail side of the display eventually reached a point that looked just like it would have in the 1940s.

Next on the agenda was some basic office equipment added to an antique desk to make it look like a working postal depot. Eventually a passable office display was put together from various sources. The crowning glory - a 1930s Hungarian typewriter. I am always continuing to add things as I find them - one of the latest items is a pair of hand stamps, so we can now frank the mail. To be added in the future is a “censored” stamp.

Now I needed some period paperwork. As you can imagine, any document from the Second World War-era Hungarian Field Post service is pretty hard to find. Luckily for me, several examples were included in the aforemen-



KEITH FOSTER PHOTOGRAPH

tioned book, so I was able to copy them for the display. Many images had writing on them, which I digitally removed so I could produce blank versions.

Since my first experiences with re-enacting, I have been taught that our purpose is to provide a historical experience to the public (who often only have been exposed to the Hollywood version), and I have always kept this in mind while making my display. So I created a sorting table and now invite members of the public to help sort out the parcels and put them into the mail bags, and the two hand stamps allow people to frank letters before putting them in the post box I had built. In the meantime I do my best to raise awareness about how the Hungarian military post worked.

It took over eighteen months (and a lot of hard work) to get the display the way I want it, but I will be always adding to it in the future. Was it worth it?

Definitely - not only has there been the enjoyment of research and discovery, but I have formed new friendships along the way and look

forward to learning more in the future.

The display was looking good and constantly improving, but I was lacking one major item – a Hungarian uniform (and a few other things a WWII military postman would need). To outfit a German soldier is relatively easy – almost everything is reproduced today. Unfortunately, that's not the case with Hungarian uniforms and equipment.

When I first considered doing a World War II Hungarian impression, the only place you could get a Hungarian uniform was from a company in the USA, and the rather large sum of money wasn't on hand at the time (the cost of

the uniform nearly doubled with the added postage). So a little at a time, I managed to slowly collect the necessary items through online auctions. When I was ready to purchase a uniform, I found that the American company no longer made them. Among other necessary things, I looked for uniform patterns online and then managed to buy enough material for the outfit from Transylvania, via a Hungarian

Continued on page 6...



JUNE VINCE PHOTOGRAPH

“Using the pictures that I had collected as guidelines (along with my small collection of postcards), a great deal of time was spent making period letters and parcels so the display would be interesting and realistic.”



RAY GERAGHTY PHOTOGRAPH



Above and below left: Some of the paperwork that I have reproduced for use in the display.

Above: Set-up at RAF Bushey Hall - a former Second World War non-flying Royal Air Force station.



JUNE VINCE PHOTOGRAPH

Commemorative Medal for the Liberation of Transylvania. Luckily Ferenc knew of an outfitter in Hungary to custom make the uniform for me: www.szabosag.com. The form for the measurements required was sent to me and duly returned with all the necessary information. After what seemed a surprisingly short wait, Ferenc informed me that the uniform was ready, and it arrived in time to be worn at the Tutbury Show in May of 2016.

In the UK there is a flourishing world of historical re-enactment shows. These cover a wide historical spectrum, but they can be split into three broad groups: multi-period, vintage, and 1940s. Today, these shows are so popular that you could attend one every weekend from mid-March until the end of October, but my limit is one or two a month. There are some favourite shows that take place every year such as the Tutbury Castle and Peak Rail shows. There are also a couple of large ones - the Victory Show and Yorkshire Wartime Experience that appear on the calendar, however, small displays have a tendency to disappear amongst the

...continued from page 4

living in Watford (the material still sits in my cupboard awaiting transformation)!

Enter Ferenc Bálint. A font of knowledge, this Hungarian Military History Institute and Museum curator and IHMHPS member is also an experienced re-enactor. Over the winter of 2015 - 2016 many emails were exchanged as we narrowed down what portrayals a man of my years could do in the 1944-45 time span I had chosen. After much deliberating and talking to Ferenc, I decided to portray a reserve officer serving in the signals section of the Hungarian Army. The fact that I was going to do a field-post display dictated that my uniform had to have the blue signals branch-of-service colour on the collar insignia. The next major discussion point were minute details such as what awards would be appropriate on my uniform, and we eventually came up with the following ribbon bar: a "Signum Laudis" (without swords), the Emperor's Troops' Cross, the Hungarian and Austrian WWI Commemorative Medals, and the

JUNE VINCE PHOTOGRAPH



larger ones.

Typically, I pack the display in my car on a Friday and travel to the show. I set up the sleeping quarters (a little two-man tent) after arriving, and then get down to some serious socialising. I get up bright and early on Saturday morning, slip into the uniform and finish setting up the display. Shows usually start around 10pm and close around 5pm, and throughout the day I have the opportunity to chat with the public about my display.

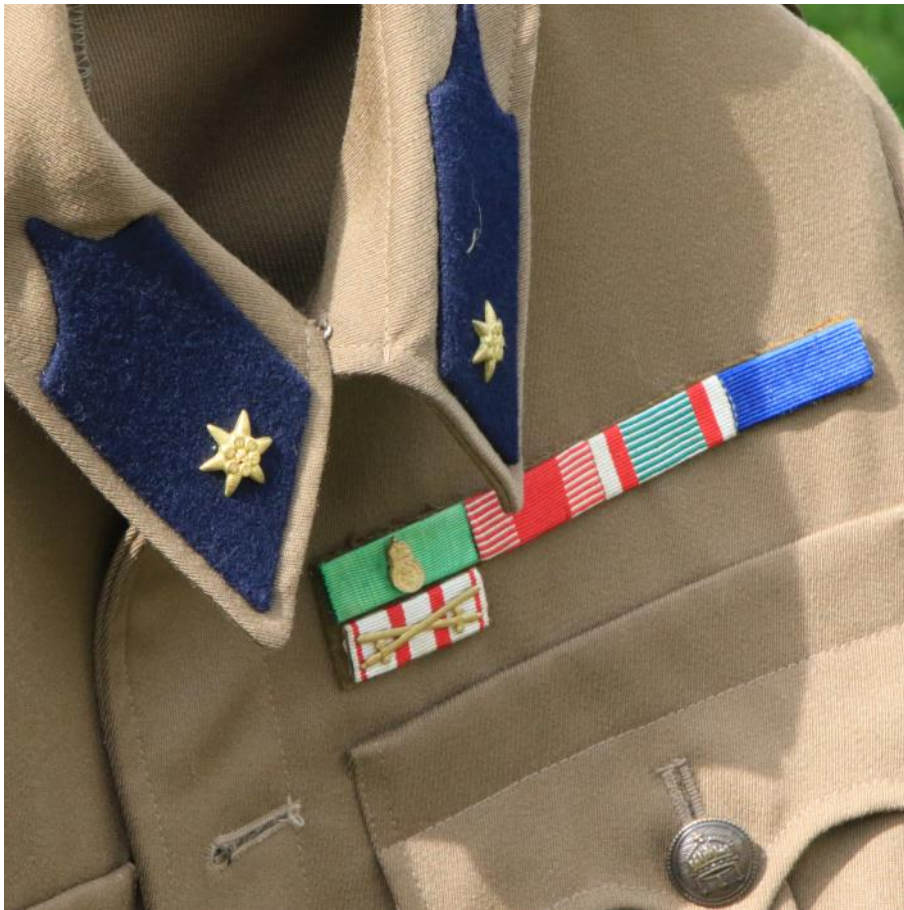
Once the show is closed for the day, I put away the majority of the items for the night (mostly the paper pieces) and then the evening is usually spent with friends and fellow enthusiasts. Sunday is much like the previous day, but after the public has left I still have the job of packing everything away in the car and traveling home. Along with the usual shows I like to attend, I have also recently put on a couple of small displays at the Eden Camp Museum, a former POW camp.

One very important thing I try to take in are comments from the public and other re-enactors. This feedback



KEITH FOSTER PHOTOGRAPH

KEITH FOSTER PHOTOGRAPH



helps me make adjustments to the display – for example, a recently received comment that it looked “too tidy” has now lead to parcels being dumped into piles as though awaiting sorting. I am happy to report that the feedback has been excellent. The fact that it is the only Hungarian display in the UK (to my knowledge) makes it unique, and being somewhat exotic to most people brings up questions about Hungary and its role in that period of history. I do my best to provide a basic outline that will hopefully inspire people to take an interest in our country and heritage.

I had no idea just how much of a ripple effect the display made until the 2017 season started and I had attended a few shows. Several people have commented on how they remember my display from last year and how it has grown and looking better than ever. The display subject is a constant topic of discussion with the public (and now even has its imitators), and even the knowledgeable re-enactors who carefully and critically study the display have given it praise.





My display will appear (weather permitting) at the following shows:

Eden Camp Museum

Tatten Park Country Fair (multi period show)

Tutbury Castle 1940s Show

Great Central Railway 1940s Show

National Brewery Centre Vintage Years Show

Yorkshire Wartime Experience

Peak Rail 1940s Show

Ramsey 1940s Show

Victory Show

North Yorkshire Railway Wartime Weekend

Papplewick 1940s Show

STEPHEN WOOD PHOTOGRAPH

Postcards from the Hungarian Frontline Fighters' Association

by Peter Czink

Today most of us send off many emails daily to keep in touch with our friends and family, to make announcements and to take care of business. Not so long ago, however, postcards were commonly used for such short messages. The Frontline Fighters' Association produced artistic postcards for fundraising and souvenirs, and used utilitarian ones for announcing meetings and events.

Very special events were even commemorated with "cinderellas" (something that resembles a postage stamp, but is not issued for postal purposes by a government postal administration) and unique cancellation stamps. The following pages feature some favourites from my collection.

CZINK COLLECTION



CZINK COLLECTION

Above:

A colourful and patriotic souvenir postcard featuring a uniformed member of the Frontline Fighters' Association sent on January 1st, 1939. The slogan "With Honour for the Homeland!" appears at the bottom.

Left:

A simple, art deco design sent on June 20th, 1938 features the association's insignia on a tri-colour banner. The bottom reads "Greetings on Frontline Fighters' Day!"

Postcards like these were sold to raise awareness of the plight of the territories taken from Hungary following the First World War.

(shown actual size)

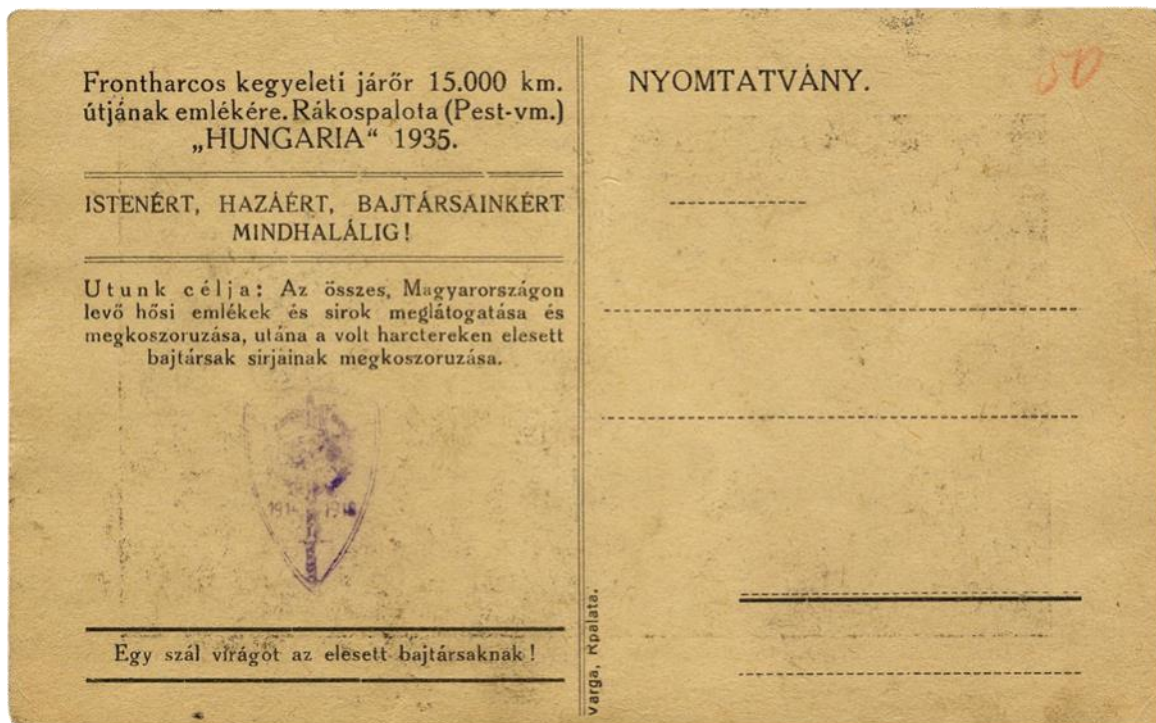


CZINK COLLECTION

Front and back of a postcard commemorating the Frontline Fighters' Association "Memorial Tour" - a 15,000 km pilgrimage organized in 1935. The mission: to visit and lay a wreath at every World War I monument and cemetery not only in Hungary, but wherever Hungarian soldiers fell in battle.

The association's slogan "For God, the Homeland and Our Comrades, Forever!" is printed in the middle of the card. Below, "One flower for every fallen soldier!" appears. This card was most likely used to raise funds for this project, however, it is unknown if this worthy tour ever took place.

(shown actual size)



Póstabélyeg kelte.



MEGHIVÓ.

1933 júli 10. n. 7 órakor

Podmanínski u. 45. II. em.

levő helyiségben frontharcos találkozózt tartunk, melyen való pontos megjelenését kérjük. — Megjelenés bajtársi kötelesség!

Tárgysorozat: *intéző bizottsági gyűlés*

Dr. HEGEDŰS BERTALAN

mint meghatalmazott szervező- (vezető-) tiszt.

Bajtársi üdvözléttel

Móve

Országos Frontharcos Szövetség
országos intézőbizottsága.

Cím: _____

CZINK COLLECTION

Two notices from the VI District Headquarters Chapter sent to Gyula Klein. The card above is a reminder of a committee meeting on July 10th, 1933; while the one pictured below announces a family event which took place at the Art Gallery Coffee Shop on February 3rd, 1937. (shown actual size)

CZINK COLLECTION

Orsz. Frontharcos Szövetség VI. ker, főcsoport elnökségétől

Értesítés.



1937 FEBR 3. n este 8 h

* Műcsarnok kávéházban *

* Andrassy-ut 64. sz. alatt *

levő helyiségünkben

ülést, találkozót tartunk **Pontos megjelenés bajtársi kötelesség!**
Akadályoztatás esetén értesítést kérünk! Öltözet: (lehetőleg) bajtársi ruha!

Tárgysorozat: *Családi összejövetel*

Kelt postabélyeg kelte.

[Signature]

vezető- (szervező) tiszt.



[Signature]

elnök.

Valaszértésítési cím a tuloldalon.



CZINK COLLECTION

Front and back of a Frontline Fighters' Association "field postcard" (made to look like those issued during the First World War) sent to Pál Király on October 3rd, 1937. This card has two cinderellas commemorating the 9th National Veteran's Convention and Camp that took place on October 2nd and 3rd of that year. The postage stamp also has a special cancellation. The caption over the dramatic image reads: "Remember! The frontline fighters fought and bled for you too." (shown actual size)

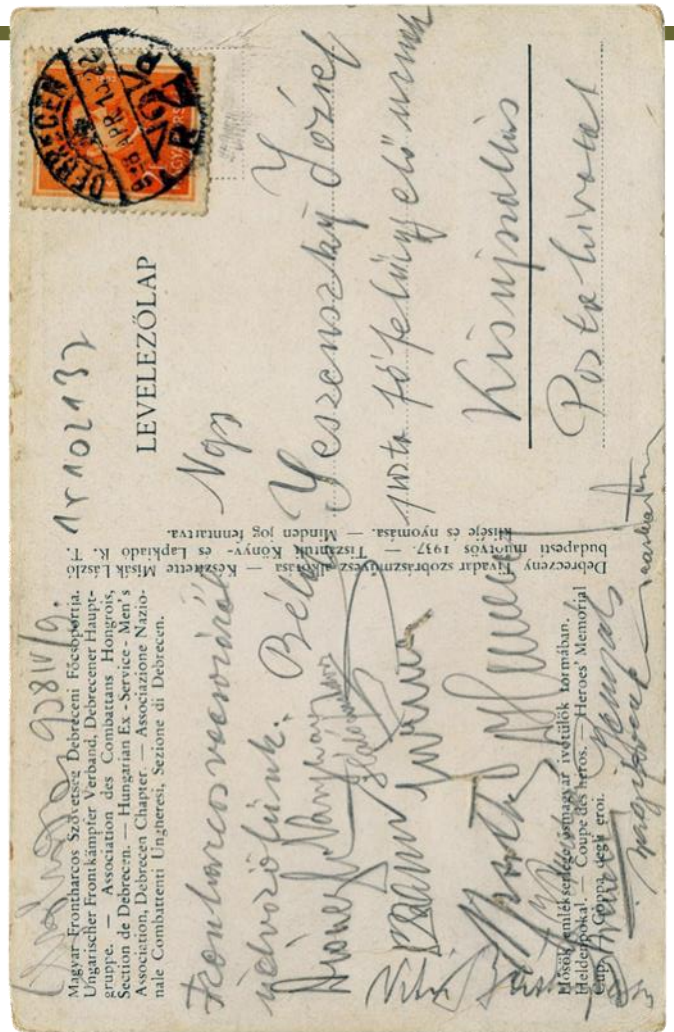




CZINK COLLECTION

Front and back of another Frontline Fighters' Association "field postcard" commemorating the convention and camp (such outdoor events, or rallies were very popular at the time) which took place in Esztergom on July 3rd, 1938. This example also has a special commemorative cinderella which matches the artwork on the Card, as well as the event's cancellations over the postage stamps on the back. These cards would raise a little money for the organization while providing a cherished souvenir of the event. (shown actual size)





CZINK COLLECTION

Above: Front and back of a Frontline Fighters' Association postcard issued by the Debrecen Headquarters Chapter. Sent on April 9th, 1938, the image is of the chapter's "Heroes' Memorial Cup." The event mentioned on the back is an association dinner, and it is signed by some of the comrades. Below: A photo postcard of the association's monument at Várpalota. (shown actual size)

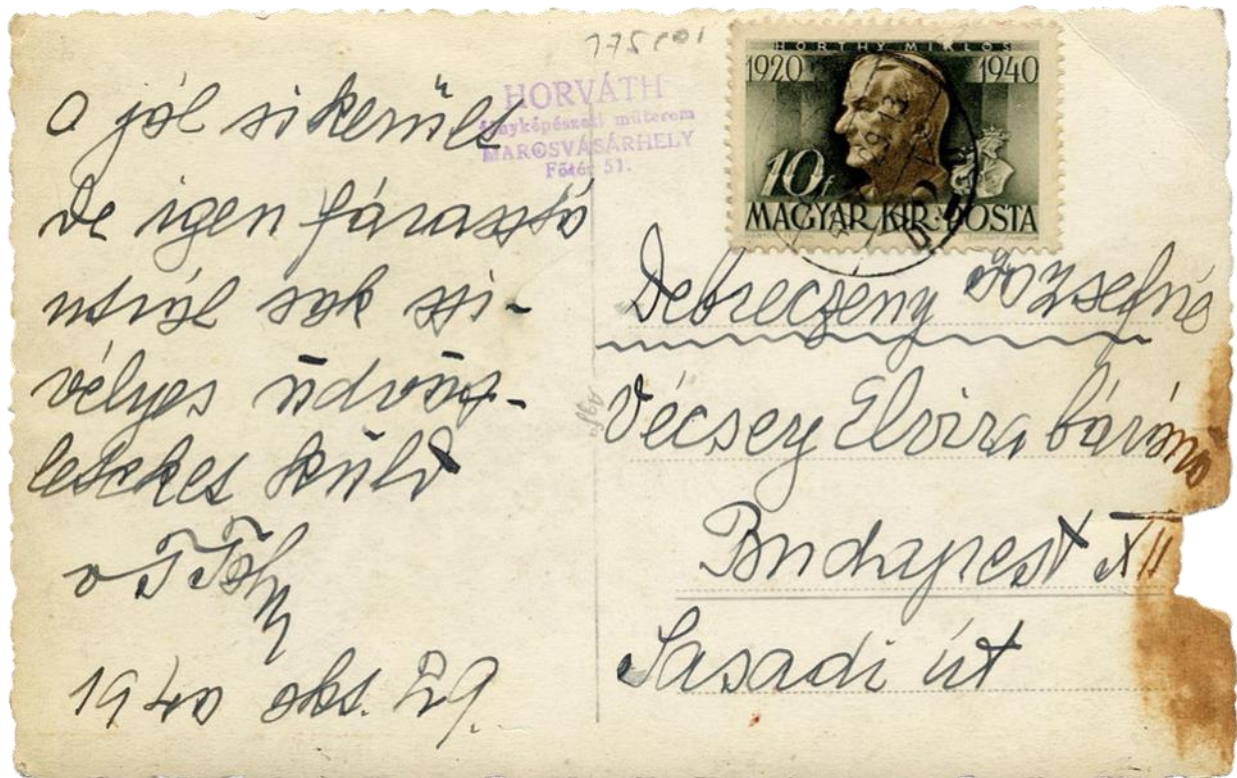
CZINK COLLECTION





CZINK COLLECTION

This real-photo postcard (shown slightly larger than actual size) shows the leader of the Frontline Fighters' Association Count József v. Takách-Tolvaý marching with an Army general and some of his comrades (the association's founder, Elemér Kertész is just behind the general's right shoulder). On October 29th, 1940, Takách-Tolvaý himself wrote on the back: "After a successful but tiring trip, I send you my cordial greetings." The recipient of this postcard was the accomplished ballet dancer Baroness Elvira Vécsey.





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